

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

Claims 19-84 are presently pending in the application. Claims 19-70 and 72-84 are allowed. Claim 71 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,984,959 to Kato in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,982,127 to Matsubara and Hainer.

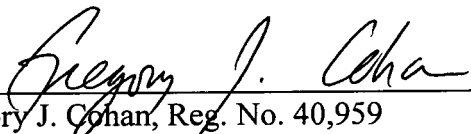
Claim 71 has been canceled. Accordingly, the application is now believed to be in form for allowance and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested at this time.

Please apply any required charges or credits to our Deposit Account No. 19-0733.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

February 4, 2003



Gregory J. Conan, Reg. No. 40,959
BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
28 State Street, 28th Floor
Boston, MA 02109-1775
Telephone: (617) 720-9600